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# The Salvation of The Little Child



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# The Salvation of The Little Child



*John Oliver*

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The Movement for the  
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## The Key

THIS little book is the voice of a movement for bringing our children into the blessing of conscious salvation at the earliest possible time, and the life-long enjoyment of the favor of God.

It is based on Scripture and the scientific facts of child-nature, and tested by observation, experiment, and reason. It gives an end, to be distinctly seen and directly sought from the beginning, which other books for the promotion of child piety have failed to present; and the relations in which this end stands to the capacities of the child, the period at which it ought to be realized, and the practical directions for bringing it to pass, are stated as simply as they can be, consistently with clearness, and as fully as limits suitable to the purpose of the widest circulation will allow.

The writer has imagined himself to be presenting his facts and pleas in *a series of fireside talks*, with a Christian father and mother, who are in general sympathy with his main purpose, but in need of instruction. The form of address, and references to his own experience, are therefore in the *first person*. In order to avoid tedious and confusing distinctions and repetitions, these parents are supposed to have one child, a boy, whose life is followed from birth to a time at which his needs come within



the range of the commonly existing spiritual helps and into his own immediate care. Parents to whom the teaching comes too late for them to carry it out at the time, and in the order and manner suggested, will find no difficulty in rearranging the directions to meet their needs, while in Chapter XIII will be found those suited to the many cases in which the children have already passed the lines of the plan. All other applications are left to parental instinct and providential leading. The fullest treatment would still leave a need of the special guidance of the Holy Spirit. To Him, in and beyond the use of this book, the reader is earnestly and affectionately commended.

December, 1907.



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## CHAPTER I

# God's Will for the Child

AN! Here is a dear babe, bright and sweet, healthy and hearty! God has been good to you. According to the best of books, "Children are a heritage of the Lord" (Psalm cxxvii, 3). Precious they are to us, yet far more precious to Him; for they belong to Him in senses beyond any in which they are ours. He charges us with the care of them *for Him*; and no failure in our duty towards our fellow human beings can grieve Him more or bring upon us severer condemnation than the neglect of their interests, especially those of their immortal souls. No duty to others, rightly done, can please Him better.

With this care in view He gives us *parental love*, and wills that it shall be like His in view and spirit and aim. In proportion to the fullness and growth of your affection for your child, and its likeness to the love of God, will be your ability to bless his life and minister to his happiness, present and eternal. In all this God calls you to be "workers together with Him;" and you are greatly honored by the trust.

Now *God's first will for your child is his salvation*. He may plan very differently for different

children in other things, but as to this, He has but one mind for them all. And you agree with Him. You would have your child puny and poor, uneducated and unknown, but saved and happy and sure of heaven by and by; rather than see him vigorous and wealthy, a man of learning and crowned with public honors, but without the saving grace of God and the hope of eternal glory; would you not? You will, of course, do your best for him in every way; but set each advantage in its due order of merit, and fix, with God, your hearts and minds, *first*, upon his salvation. From time to time you will be tempted to put something else in its place until that special something can be accomplished; but, however excellent that thing may be in itself, and in its proper order, firmly refuse to allow it more than its own rightful importance. Make it follow the highest good at a respectful distance. "The first thing first," is God's law, as Jesus taught (Matt. vi, 33), and it is the only safe rule for us.

Applied to the case of your child, it means that *God wills that he shall give his heart and life to Him at the earliest possible moment, and be first, and always, and fully, devoted to Him in love and service.* Can you doubt this or think of God as having any other will for him? If you could, would it not shatter your faith in His goodness?

Life can not be empty. It may be filled with good; but if this is missed, evil will take its place, with injury to the soul. Can it be otherwise? And if this is true of a lifetime, will it not be true of a year or a day? Depend upon it, the child who has spent ever so short a time in conscious evil has received a hurt. He can not be all that he would

have been if he had spent it in good. We are apt to think that everything has gone well if children are converted in their middle teens, but that is a great mistake. I was converted at fifteen, had been brought up by the best of Christian parents, and had not fallen into open vice; yet I had acquired hurtful habits of mind and soul, which, though they did not finally prevent my turning to God, made it more difficult than it need have been, and left weaknesses which I have had to watch and fight against ever since. I might have avoided the stress and vexation. I might have been a better and happier boy and man. I can not recall the lost benefit. I can not fully rid myself of the damage. I can not undo the wrong; I can only be sorry. Can such an experience be the will of God? It can not.

But the life without salvation may run on and on through the years with all this loss of good and doing of evil, and at last be exchanged for a hopeless eternity of the same character. It is vain to flatter ourselves that this is not possible to *our* children. The most degraded of sinners were once babes such as yours, and by no means all of them the offspring of wicked parents. I have known such to come from the homes of the Christian ministry. Inheritance can not fully or even mainly explain such characters and careers. We may as well be sensible about this, and realize that every child, no matter how great his advantages from parentage and other conditions, has still in him all the possibilities of saint or sinner in this world, and of perfected and glorified spirit or of hopelessly evil and lost spirit in the world to come. I remember a series of pictures which gave me a vivid impression

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of this truth. At the left hand was a sweet child-face, promising everything one could desire; and from this, stretching across the page, two sets of studies of the same child as boy, young man, middle-aged man, and old man. The upper set showed the growth of noble character, until the most beautiful of all was the "hoary head," truly "a crown of glory," because "found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. xvi, 31); while the lower set showed the child going down—down—through increasing wickedness and degradation until he had become a loathsome object. And what is heaven but the progress, upward and forever, of the one course; and hell, but the eternal progress downward of the other? Add to the child's own possibilities of evil that, when once he has chosen the broad road, the world and the devil will help him to destruction, and you have a picture that makes one shudder and cry, "God forbid!" But He *does* forbid it; and provides the gracious means for preventing it, and for securing the choice of the upward way with all its blessings.

The consequences of the child's course, however, are not confined to himself. Think of what they will mean to you, to whom, of all his earthly friends, the vision has most of joy or terror. And the whole world is concerned. Every sinful career lowers the tone of the world's life, and makes its moral atmosphere less wholesome for other souls to breathe; every life filled with good makes the world a better place for everybody else to live in. Above all it touches God. To save that very child, He gave Himself in His Son to die in the infinite sacrifice of the cross, and in His Holy Spirit to work on



his conscience and heart. So we may be sure that He will not be content with less than the whole of his life and love and service. The days of tender childhood are as much His by right as any, and when taken from Him, are not only spent under His displeasure, but are also a cause of infinite grief to Him. Earth loses, heaven loses, and—I say it reverently—God loses, more than can be told, when one soul misses salvation for however short a time; the fact will be eternally true and cause for unspeakable regret. Earth gains, heaven gains, and God gains, more than I can say, when salvation is accepted at the earliest time possible, and retained; and the gain is everlasting and cause for unspeakable rejoicing.

From every sane and honest point of view we are bound to see that the only experience that can really and finally satisfy God, the godly, and the child himself, is that which knows salvation from the outset, and gains all its benefits in both worlds. Come, then, into entire and whole-hearted agreement with God; not merely in what you believe about this subject, but also in what you are willing to be and to do to the end desired of Him. Say *now* with all your heart, “All Thy will, Father; *all* Thy will for our child, and for us in our duty to him.” Can you, dare you, say less? No, indeed! You will gladly set your whole natures to seek and to do that good will. It is well!



## CHAPTER II

# God's Will for the Parent

IN addition to what God does in direct ways for the salvation of your child, He calls in the help of human agents, and among these gives the chief place of responsibility to you as parents. Yours is the earliest and greatest opportunity of influence. No one else ought to take that place with any child as long as there is a Christian parent to hold it. Unsaved parents are not freed from this obligation; they ought to be Christians and capable of their duty. Their failure is a dishonor, their children are wronged, and God is grieved.

This work, however, is more than duty, it is high privilege. You remember that President Lincoln used to say: "All I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother; blessings on her memory." When such a testimony includes the service I have specially in view, you may know that the mother has come into the greatest glory of her motherhood. Why should it not be said as often of the father? Only because it is more rarely true. My own father, though a very busy man, did quite as much for me, *in his way*, as my mother. It was a grand way too, strong and yet kind. Why was I not won at the outset? I have not time to tell you

all I know about it. I will do better by passing on to you the lessons that can be learned from my memories. I ought to say, however, that the influence of my parents' faithfulness helped much to my conversion later; and my heart is filled with gratitude upon every remembrance of it.

When I hear a son of godly parents say that the Rev. Mr. ——— led him to the Savior, I am glad for the parson, but very sorry for the parents. He must go through life remembering that though they cared for him in other ways, they did not lead him to his highest good. Did they think that it was the minister's special business? It may be; if so they sadly blundered. Though a pastor, I do not covet the privilege for myself or for my class. What right have I, for example, to the strongest gratitude of your child? God has given me a duty and privilege of my own, and I am doing and enjoying these, in part, at this moment in showing yours to you. But I will not usurp your place, the right of those who gave him birth.

Again, you need and desire the confidence of your child. You rightly wish that during his up-growing, and most of all when he is choosing his friends, his wife, and his life-calling, he shall confide fully in you, and make no plans that you can not influence. Now if you minister to his inner life so continually and so wisely that he can talk freely to you about it, and also help him to form right judgments for himself, you will do more to encourage his turning to you in his times of need than by all other means in your power. You can only meet crises as they arise; you can secure his spiritual confidence from the beginning.

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You can not now doubt that it is God's will that you should be the chief human agents in the salvation of your child. It is a purpose of love both for you and for him. So face your duty, claim your privilege, glorify your God, lead your child to Him and to heaven, prevent sin, increase righteousness, and, in the blessings that follow, find your present and eternal recompense.

Now you are wondering whether my enthusiasm is justified by personal experience. Then I must take you back more than thirty years to the time when our first-born, a daughter, was given us of the Lord, and, with her, the beliefs which I have been presenting to you. We dedicated our little one to Him at birth, and did whatever else occurred to us as helpful to the end in view. At that time I was in business, and my wife enjoyed the larger opportunity in training, and the supreme privilege of bringing the young spirit to the momentous decision when a little less than five years old. It came about on a Sabbath when I was filling a distant appointment as a lay preacher. A simple talk, leading directly to the plain issue, was followed by prayer, and the "great transaction" was done. Imagine our mutual rejoicing when I returned to hear the story! Our thanksgivings continue to this day, and increase in fervor and blessedness.

Was it a deep and permanent work? It was, indeed! The evidences were immediate and unmistakable, and the relation to God then established has never been broken. To-day, as a mother, our child is leading her children in the same way, with a clear recollection of God's dealings with her own soul to encourage her.

You ask if so early a devotion to the spiritual did not spoil her childhood, bringing into it an undue care and unnatural seriousness. Certainly not; why should it? On the contrary, she entered with a keen relish into the innocent pleasures of youth, enjoying them none the less, but all the more, because she loved her heavenly Father, and knew that they were a part of His loving will for her. But her happiness did not depend upon them, nor did she crave the doubtful or dangerous. She was a thoroughly natural child.

Do you wonder that we are enthusiasts on the subject of child salvation? "Very unusual!" did you say? True, but there was nothing either in the methods or the results that is not equally within the reach and use of any Christian parent. Why should it not be the rule rather than the extraordinary exception?

The opportunity did not come again. Our only other child passed away in infancy, but left us with a joyful interest in another side of the same blessed truth. Of this I will speak later.

## CHAPTER III

### From Birth to Accountability

You ask what is the earliest possible time at which your child can give himself to God and enter into the blessedness of conscious salvation. I answer, *at the time when he becomes responsible for rightly choosing between good and evil*. Let us call that time *the threshold of accountability*.

He is born with a moral nature; but this, like his body and mind, is, for a time, in a state of infancy. By the growth of that moral nature he is every moment drawing nearer to that *threshold*, and if he lives much beyond physical and mental infancy he will certainly cross it and become answerable to God for his choice of principles and conduct. We will therefore call the period which reaches from birth to accountability *the period of moral infancy*. This puts out of the question the size and age of the child, and even the strength of his mind (within the range of sanity), and sees him simply in the *moral* view. He will be a moral infant as long as he can not make such distinctions between good and evil as are necessary to render him justly responsible for choosing the good and refusing the evil. For this he needs both knowl-



edge and the capacity to judge of what he knows; and these only come to him gradually, with the growth of his mind and moral nature, and the opportunities of observation and instruction. The circumstances of different children differ so greatly in these respects that we can not say, in any case, how long moral infancy will last.

We must not, however, think of the child as altogether dependent for his moral growth upon human teachings. God has also provided for his *direct* instruction by the Holy Spirit, in ways suited to his needs and knowledge. Though he should never hear a word about God, he would still, at some early time, become accountable for obeying the inward voice which says, "You ought," and "You ought not," and which we call *conscience*. That voice represents God for the child, who as yet knows nothing about Him. Conscience is his thinking and feeling, working together in considering the right and wrong of things; and is dependent for its thinking and feeling rightly upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who is always working upon it during the continuance of His mercy. It will grow and do its work if it be not hindered. For hindered it may be by wrong teaching and other evil influences; and helped it may be, beyond the direct working of the Holy Spirit, by human teaching inspired of Him, as all right teaching surely is. So conscience grows with knowledge and moral capacity, and is more and more useful, until the mind can rightly instruct the spirit and join with it to direct the will in its choice. From that time the conscience will be exercised upon all moral questions arising, and will make its influence in-

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creasingly felt, even though the child may not yet understand what it is or know it by name. When, at the first, he hears it say, "You ought," and does what it prompts him to do; the same voice says, "That is right," and he is satisfied and happy; as also when he refrains from doing what the voice forbids. We call that *the approval of conscience*. But if he disobeys, the voice says, "That is wrong," and he is unsatisfied and unhappy. Conscience not only judges words and actions, but also thoughts and feelings, motives and purposes, and approves the good and condemns the evil that is so often found mixed in them all. In all its ways it works for good throughout all honest life. The little child begins with a tender conscience, and ought to retain it in that condition as long as he lives. Nothing but evil can harden it, and the only way to keep it true and sensitive is to constantly educate it God-wards and protect it from whatever can draw it from its loyal course.

Conscience, however, only explains accountability in part. The child must also have the conscious power to make and carry out the right choice, and successfully to resist the temptation to all others. Here, too, God does the necessary work by His Spirit; not forcing the will, but by His grace enabling it to follow His direction. The child will discover some time that he can do the right when he so chooses, and will use that power, though he may not recognize the Spirit in it any more than in the conscience. His right choosing and doing do not come from *native goodness*, as so many suppose. The child's course is determined, in every moral sense, by his choice, but only by grace can he make



a right choice, and even then he will need divine help to carry it out.

Is there then no native goodness? There is not. Man in his fallen state inclines only and always to evil; and the right things that he does are chosen and done under gracious influences working on him from without; and so, not being caused by any native love for God and righteousness, do not make him right in himself or acceptable to God. If we should all be left altogether without grace, acting either directly upon us from the Spirit, or indirectly through lives and customs wholly or partly ruled by grace, we should soon be made sure of the total depravity of the human race. All the glory of all the good in us all, really and finally belongs to God, and as much in the child's case as in any. The natural depravity of his moral infancy is *total* because it is of the same measure as his moral stature.

To him let us return. When he realizes that everything with a moral quality is either right or wrong; that he knows how to find out which it is; that he ought to do right and can do it, and that he ought not to do wrong, and need not do it; his moral accountability has begun.

This general form of accountability applies to all men; but there is a special application of its principles to those who know of God, of their own sinful state, and of His plan for saving them from that state. The truths of Christianity are before us in the Bible, and every one to whom they come is called of God to believe in and accept them as the foundations of his spiritual life. God says, in effect, "I have made this plan and provision to save you from sin; accept it. I offer My grace through My

Son and Spirit; let it do its work in you." Man can not, without sinning, ignore, neglect, or reject this call, for these are but different expressions of the same attitude of the human spirit against God. This view of the case was shown by Christ when He spoke of the Holy Spirit as reproving the world of sin because they did not believe on Him (John xvi, 8), and it is supported by other of His teachings (John iii, 18, 36, etc.). Moreover the Spirit was also to testify of righteousness. Christ showed this to be possible to man, by the effects of grace in His own human nature; and, ever since He went up from the sight of the world, the Spirit has continued this testimony, that righteousness is attainable by all who avail themselves of the same grace. Therefore no man who knows these truths is lost simply because he has committed any other sin or any number of such sins, but because he will not allow God to save him from sin. In this way a *special* sin is possible to those who are thus accountable, viz., the rejection of the revealed grace of God; and for persistence in this sin man will be justly and eternally rejected by God.

This form of accountability comes to the child when he has learnt enough of Christianity to realize his duty to embrace it and to know that rejection is sinful. Just how much he must know about it in order to this it may be difficult to say; but the Gospel is simple, and people of very humble powers of mind have, in all the centuries, found it easy to believe, and to obtain all its blessings. For faith may grasp the main benefit by accepting the main purpose and provision, and gather the rest of knowledge and advantage afterwards; indeed, that is a

common experience. This is well within the power of the child at the *threshold*. It is not necessary to his salvation that he should understand it fully. But it is plain that by the time he reaches that crisis he ought to know enough of Christianity to avail himself of the grace it reveals to save, and keep him under the new conditions of moral accountability. The importance of this will be better seen when we come to discuss the methods by which he may be led to accept it.

## CHAPTER IV

# The Salvation of the Moral Infant

WHAT is the spiritual state of the child during his moral infancy? We commonly speak of him as *innocent*, by which, if we use that word in a proper sense, we mean that he is innocent of any consciously evil intention, and this is true because the day in which he first fully realizes such an intention brings his moral accountability. But if we mean that everything that he thinks or feels, says or does, is good or even harmless, we are seriously mistaken.

Now let common sense judge of this question in the light of the Word and human experience. The child, like all the children of all the generations, has inherited an evil nature. God has said so through David: "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm li, 5), and the same truth is taught and assumed throughout the Scriptures. The possibilities of expressing evil are, of course, limited with the moral infant; but there are enough of them known to us all to serve the needs of discussion. Think of anger, deceit, and selfishness, for example. In these the will is active, though the child does not choose them as knowing them to be evil. In an accountable person these would be consciously sinful, would they not? The only difference between the two cases is that

the child does not know, as the older one does, enough about the character and tendency of the evil to render him accountable for it. His innocence is due to his ignorance, but the evil in him is none the less real because he does not understand it. Not only is it in him, but it will continue there and grow, if it is not cast out by some power not of himself. It will bar heaven against him if it is not disposed of in some way satisfactory to the holy God, for we can no more conceive of Him as admitting to His heaven an *infant* soul with evil in it than any other soul in that condition.

Does this mean that God will permit an infant inheriting an evil nature, and dying before he can secure deliverance from it, to suffer eternally on account of it? It does not. The case is fully met by His mercy. On what ground? In what manner? God saves the moral infant, not because he is "an innocent little thing," or "the best child in the world" in the eyes of his parents, but because He loves him infinitely more, and more wisely, than the fondest of human parents. He not only sees the child's present innocence of ignorance, and feels an infinite sympathy with his helplessness; but also has in view his immediate and eternal future, and those immense possibilities that we were so lately talking about. If the child was allowed to enter heaven with his original evil nature unchanged he would grow to such moral maturity as is possible there, and the evil would grow in like measure. The place could not change his native inclination to evil. His own existence would be cursed by it, and heaven would be spoiled, which God has declared shall not be (Rev. xxi, 27). But the divine purpose is so to



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save the child from his evil nature that his eternal growth shall be in a holiness God-like and worthy of heaven. Where shall that salvation be wrought if not on this side of eternity? We know of no such change in the next world. Our Father, blessed be His name! has provided for every child that he shall be saved throughout his moral infancy without any effort on his own part, and in the absence of any human help.

That provision is made by the atonement of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, just as for all the rest of mankind. The accountable, however, can only secure the benefit on fulfillment of certain conditions. Having consciously sinned by a wrong moral choice, they must needs turn from their sin to God and holiness by a new and right choice; and repentance and faith are both the natural and ordained means to that end. These conditions are necessary to their good as well as to God's glory, and we can not conceive of any salvation from sin as possible to them apart from such conditions. Now the moral infant, not being capable, either of such moral choice as is necessary to conscious sinning, or of repenting and believing; it becomes as just for God to extend His mercy and grace to him *without conditions* as to do so *with conditions* to those capable of fulfilling them. If the respective cases should be submitted to any man strong in the principles of justice, though knowing nothing beforehand of God, I am sure that he would say that such a Being with such circumstances before Him ought to do exactly that which we judge from His Word He has done. God's justice secures that His law shall be adapted to the state and capacity of

those He governs; in what way could this have been better done? He does not say, on the one hand: "This child, not having sinned with conscious intent, needs no change; admit him to My heaven as he is;" nor, on the other hand: "This child can not repent and believe; turn him away," but rather: "This child has an evil nature from which he must be saved before he can enter into My glory, but since he has not consciously chosen evil and can not do anything to rid himself of it, the merits of My Son's sacrifice and the work of My Spirit shall meet his needs without any action of his own." The child's salvation is plainly within God's general plan.

You ask what is wrought in the moral infant corresponding to the change brought about in an accountable believer, whose nature is cleansed from sin and brought out of spiritual death into spiritual life. I answer, that what is done in the one is done in the other, with no other difference in the immediate result than would naturally arise out of their differences of mental and moral capacity. What then becomes of the inherited depravity? It might seem at first thought as if this ought to be removed from the child at the outset. That it is not is proved by the evidences of evil in such children. But is not this true also of accountable believers? Ask the most faithful. They will tell you that even if they do not *wilfully* disobey God, they know that they commit sins of ignorance, and these, as being contrary to the will of God, need His mercy, and can not be ignored merely because those who have committed them did not think of them as being wrong. Being sure that they have so sinned, they take the unknown with the known to Him, plead



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for His mercy, and believe that all alike are pardoned and purged.

Now the manifestations of evil in the moral infant are like sins of ignorance in the accountable. Let me illustrate this from my daughter's experience. During her moral infancy she was given to violent outbursts of ill-temper which no discipline served to cure. With the great change these gave way, though for a time the *disposition* occasionally showed itself. But it was then enough, when the storm was gathering, to say, "That would not please Jesus," to bring her with a rush to her mother's side, there to sob out her penitence. Though she clearly remembers the transaction with God at the *threshold*, she has no recollection of the earlier troubles. This may be explained by the absence of *conscious intent* and *condemnation*, for if these had been present the impression would naturally have been more lasting. This seems to confirm my view; and in such case, as the moral infant can not pray and believe for the removal of such evils, we are sure that they are pardoned and cleansed by God without any action on his part.

It does not follow, however, that because the good Spirit does not do everything at the outset, that He therefore does not do anything. On the contrary, we have good grounds for believing that He does directly and largely limit the evil nature in the child, and that this must be taken along with His help to good, to explain what we are apt to regard as native goodness. There is really no greater difficulty in believing in the efficient and sufficient work of the Spirit in his case than in that of the sanctified believer.

If then the work of the Spirit is limited during moral infancy, when is it completed? When does He complete it in believers? Do these attain, even at their best, to a perfect *fitness* for heaven within this life? I find nothing in Scriptural or human evidence to show that they do. True, Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven without death *as we know it*; but doubtless a change was wrought at their translation by which the remainders of earthly imperfections were removed. Paul (1 Cor. xv, 50) says that the saints who shall be living at the second coming of Christ will not "sleep," but will be "changed;" and this implies that they will be brought "in a moment" into the condition of those who have risen from the dead, and that they will all alike have incorruptible, perfected, and glorified natures. This may also be justly applied to the case of the moral infant; and, as in the case of original salvation, without conditions. We may safely rest on the known character, will, and power of God, and believe that whatever is necessary to the complete salvation of the child in his moral helplessness He will do *in* him as well as *for* him. However little we may know of His method in this, we may be sure that there is no danger of failure.

Does not all this provision of grace glorify the little ones in our view? Insignificant are they, because helpless? No, indeed! not even the babes of the most degraded. And for all, when they pass from us within moral infancy, there are the untold possibilities of eternity in the perfected and heavenly state. Whether in the cradle or the coffin, our most certain and blessed thought of them is that they are *God's children*.

## CHAPTER V

### What Did Jesus Mean?

LET us now turn to such of the Savior's teachings as relate to our subject and see if we are in agreement with them; for He knew the divine intentions as none other could know them; and if He did not make a full doctrinal statement of them, it is certain that whatever He taught was entirely in harmony with them.

The story of His blessing the little children as told in Matt. xix, 13-15; Mark x, 13-16; and Luke xviii, 15-17, is familiar to us. We need only consider His ever memorable words of encouragement: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," as Matthew gives them; or, "of God," as in Mark and Luke. The American Revision reads: "To such belongeth the kingdom." This gives a different view, but does not alter the teaching, for those who belong to the kingdom also possess it. The same Teacher said: "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii, 21).

It is usual to explain the saying by what Mark and Luke show Him to have added, that: "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." This accords with

His action and teaching when the twelve apostles had been disputing "which of them should be the greatest" in the kingdom (Matt. xviii, 1-3; Mark ix, 33-37; Luke ix, 46-48). His immediate purpose was to correct their false notions and save them from wrong ambitions; but the way He took to do this reveals somewhat of the spiritual possibilities of the children. He called to Him a little child and said: "Except ye be converted (revisions read "turn") and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (to say nothing of being great in it). "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as *this* little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." "Whosoever shall receive one such (revisions add "little") child in My name receiveth Me." And to this He added, either immediately (as Matthew gives it), or later, (as Mark ix, 42 and Luke xvii, 2): "But whoso shall offend (revisions read "cause to stumble") one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

From these incidents, taken together, we may find certain plain teachings. As to the first case; if the kingdom consists of such as those little ones that were brought to the Savior, we may be sure that these themselves belonged to it. He did not specify the grounds on which His statement rested, but we are not left to assume that they belonged to it simply because they were of a humble and trustful spirit, for that is not all that is necessary to salvation, as He elsewhere made certain; for example, in John iii, 3, 5. They were either moral infants or child-believers. If they had reached ac-

countability and were living in conscious choice of evil, He could not have truly said that of such was His kingdom. From the terms used in the Gospel we judge that some, if not all, were of the former class. Matthew calls them "little children;" Mark, "young (revisions, "little") children;" and Luke, "infants" (revisions, "babes"). If we understand Christ as meaning that they were in His kingdom because of the provision of grace for their state, all difficulty disappears. Then, too, we can see the strongest reason for His blessing them, and why the receiving of such *in His name*, or *as belonging to Him*, would be the receiving of Himself, for here is no reference to mere kindness to children for humanity's sake. If their only relation to Him was that of *possible future* subjects whenever they should enter the kingdom by conscious choice, His indignation at the disciples' efforts to turn them away could not be explained on the grounds given by Himself.

As to the second case, the Savior's words "which believe in Me," declare plainly the spiritual standing of the little one before Him as a child believer. His warning to all who might cause such an one to stumble is consistent with this view, whereas nothing of their doing could disturb the saved state of a moral infant. And what a rebuke is given to our false notions of the incapacity of little children for the spiritual because of their limited years and knowledge, when our Lord declares to His adult disciples that they must become like this child-believer in order to enter His kingdom.

Matthew (xviii, 10) records another teaching in which Christ warned His hearers, "Take heed that



ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father." The angels He spoke of are not the spirits of children who have died, for the word He used means those who minister to others, as it is used for the pastors of the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. i, ii, iii), and for God's heavenly messengers throughout the New Testament without exception. So we may safely assume that these are angels appointed to care for the little ones, in number and forms of ministration according to their need. Christ spoke of this to show the value of the children in His Father's sight. It is pleasing, of course, to think of them as the subjects of angelic guidance and protection, but they are only so because they are the subjects of the infinitely higher interest of the God whom the angels supremely love and serve.

Immediately upon this Christ gave the parable of "The Lost Sheep," and added (v, 14): "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Here the child is seen in his early accountability as in the same danger through evil as the rest of the race; and as, therefore, to be the subject of spiritual help, human as well as divine. He is commended to our sympathy and interest on the ground of his need. We find then, that though the Divine Teacher did not declare the doctrine of the salvation of the moral infant in the manner and terms of our last discussion, none of His direct teachings contradict or even qualify these, but are all in harmony with them, and, as far as they go, support them.

If you ask why Christ did not deal more directly

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and fully with the case of the child, I answer that His treatment of it, in method and proportion of interest, was in keeping with His usual course with similar questions. He did not profess to make a full revelation upon it. His teachings were to be extracted from sermon and parable, conversation and act, and taken with other truths—as given by the divinely inspired men who came before and followed after Him; and all of it to be viewed in the light of the laws of nature and natural affection. It was left to us to search out all that can be learned from these sources, and to set in order for ourselves a complete and consistent line of faith and duty. The obligations so discovered are none the less binding when we fail, through neglect, to find them.



## CHAPTER VI

### Dedication

HAVING provided for the salvation of your child during his moral infancy, God wills that you should so work under His guidance as to bring him, at the threshold of accountability, to a free and full decision to continue his relation to Him in hearty love and service. Now if you are to accomplish this with the most of good and the prevention of all possible of evil, you must use the proper means faithfully and diligently *throughout the whole of his moral infancy.*

What is your first duty? *Dedication.* The child is God's by creation and salvation, but He has given him to you. He is yours by parentage; give him to God. Say to Him in plain words that you do so, and with praise for all the blessings and possibilities of good which you see to be his and yours. Dwell upon these until the Spirit fills you with joy and gratitude; until the greatness of your opportunity shall lead you to a due sense of the corresponding greatness of your responsibility. Then you will realize that you can not meet this except by His grace and power; and then you will pray for him and for yourselves, that God will work out His loving will.

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What will God do in response to your dedication and prayers that He would not have done without them? How can these bring any good to the child, or their omission work him any wrong? I answer that dedication is an act of love and of faith. You love God and want your child also to love Him. You love your child and want him to enjoy all spiritual good. You believe that God wills what you so desire. He has already given him *saving* grace. How much of other grace can He not give? In *temporal* things you do not limit your desires to that which barely supports life, much less should you do so in the spiritual. Why should you not pray for the largest blessing for your child? God is not hindered from granting this in one form because of his incapacity for receiving it in another. Blessing is not confined to the giving of power for the immediate being or doing of things visible and calculable. The budding time and early stages of infant growth afford Him constant opportunity of giving good in forms unseen by you, and with effects which you can not measure. Can He not give him such spiritual help that—though without his knowing why—he shall think and feel more deeply and clearly in his early days about the things of the soul than he would otherwise have done? If the child himself could pray for such help, would not God grant it to him? And since he can not pray, will not God so bless him in answer to the prayers of his parents?

Does the Bible help us here? It does. Take the case of Hannah, at the opening of the First Book of Samuel. It is plain from the story, particularly the facts of the vow and the naming of the child

(Samuel means, "heard of God"), that this mother, and most likely her husband with her, so devoted him to the life and service of the Lord. I say "the life," because it was not merely to *do* things for Him that the child was given, but first to *be* holy in order to *do* holy and acceptable service. That is God's will; doubtless Hannah prayed in harmony with it.

Did God do nothing *special* for Samuel during his moral infancy? Was not that beautiful confidence which answered to the call of the Unseen, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth," given him in such large measure while unknowingly he was learning to trust? While conscience was forming, was there no unusual gift of the clearness, sensitiveness, and power which enabled him in old age to challenge all Israel as to his integrity? He might have been a good and useful man without dedication; he was, doubtless, a better and more useful man because of it; and there is every reason for believing that what God wrought in him in response to it ran parallel with his development from the outset.

Does modern experience help us? As one instance out of many, take this: In 1884 died a man whose name was a household word in the Christian Church. His career was so manifestly directed of God as to mark him to his friends as a child of providence. He was always under the influence of grace. By and by came the call to preach the Gospel. Now he shall tell his own story as he told it when he had become famous. He said:

"My mother was a widow; I was her only son, and the only child remaining at home. It seemed

impossible to leave her. I feared it might almost break her heart to propose it. But as I saw that the Church would probably call me, and as I had promised God to follow His openings, I one day, with great embarrassment, introduced the subject to my mother. After I had told her of my mental struggles, and what I believed God required, I paused. I shall never forget how she turned to me with a smile on her countenance and her eyes suffused with tears, as she said: 'My son, I have been looking for this hour ever since you were born.' She then told me how she and my dying father, who left me when an infant, consecrated me to God, and prayed that *if it were His will*, I might become a minister. And yet that mother had never dropped a word of intimation in my hearing that she ever desired me to be a preacher. She believed so fully in a *divine* call that she thought it wrong to bias the youthful mind with even a suggestion uttered in vocal prayer. That conversation settled my mind."

Who was he? Bishop Matthew Simpson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Need I say more?

But were not these men destined for great eminence, and was not their dedication providentially ordered in view of that? We have better reason for believing that they were made great because they were dedicated. With their parents, public honors were not in mind. In each case the child was given to God to be used as He should see fit. That is the sort of trust that He most highly blesses. So bring before Him all your desires for your child; but when you ask that he may be helped or used in ways not within the right of all, qualify your peti-

tions with a full submission to the divine judgment. It is doubtful if they will be granted in the absence of such submission.

The child can, of course, upset your kind purpose. But so can he also successfully resist all your later efforts for his benefit. You can only be clear of your responsibility when you have done *all* that you can do; and dedication is no trifling item in the list of possibles. If you fail in this duty your child must needs lose whatever of good would have come to him by your faithfulness, and you will lose the corresponding blessing and satisfaction.

But why not wait until the child can give himself to God, and by fulfilling this duty then help him to do his? I answer that you can help him better by doing it at birth; for then you can tell him as soon as he can profit by it: "When you were a wee baby we gave you to God, and have prayed every day since that you may give yourself to Him." Will not all this past interest deeply impress him, and help him to a right decision? Will not your wish and prayer at his crisis be more influential because of it?

Finally, will you not do your other duties throughout more fully and steadily for such an act at the beginning? From time to time you will be tempted to slacken your efforts, not necessarily through loss of love or interest, but under the pressure of the thousand and one cares of daily life. Then you will remember, and set these inferior things firmly aside, saying: "I *must* keep my word with my God." And, having so persisted throughout his moral infancy, will you not be ready to continue that care as adapted to his accountable state?

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Nothing will conduce more to the breaking up, among godly parents, of the neglect of these later duties than this making of such a solemn consecration first of all. With other efforts in harmony, it will do much to insure the easiest and most thorough accomplishment of the designs of God.



## CHAPTER VII

### Baptism

NEXT comes the baptism of your child.

Let us first regard this as a second form of dedication. In this instance, however, the act has aims beyond those immediately in view in the earlier form. For the honoring of God before the Church and the world, and for the good of both of these, this is a public act. It is a saying by the parents, before all men, that they believe that the child belongs to God, not only by His right as Creator but also by redemption and present salvation; and that they will work with Him for the further fulfillment of His will.

Baptism so regarded, is helpful as confirming what has already been done in the home. Why not then make them one? Because baptism may be delayed by causes beyond your control, dedication can not. Besides there is no more reason for merging the private in the public act in this case than in that of private and public worship. God calls us to both; each brings its own blessings, and its distinct gain in sense of obligation and strength to fulfill it.

Baptism, however, is much more than a dedication. As one definition has truly said, it is "an

outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." It is an application of water to the subject as a symbol of the cleansing of the soul from evil by the grace of God, bought by the sacrifice of Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit. It is also "a sign of regeneration or the new birth" of the soul from its death in sin into the new life of holiness. From the way in which Christ coupled together the cleansing and the new birth (John iii, 1-6), as alike essential to admission to His kingdom, as well as from all related Scriptures, we understand that these are wrought at one and the same time, and they may be regarded as two views of the same work of grace. Hence there is no need of a separate sacramental symbol to represent the new birth.

Has the moral infant a right to baptism? I answer that he is saved by grace. The only difference between his case and that of an accountable person converted from sin is in the *form* of the experience, and not in its principle or efficacy. Since he stands so related to God under the provisions of His mercy that if he dies before reaching accountability he will surely go to heaven, what is there in his case to make baptism a questionable proceeding? If possessed by the grace, why not ready for the outward and visible sign of it? If sealed for heaven, why not fit for baptism?

But is baptism a *means of grace* to the child? It is. How can it help him? Just as dedication does; in that God honors the act of love and faith by blessing him. We do not baptize him to secure his salvation; for that is already his, and he is benefiting by it up to his present capacity. If it depended on baptism, the neglect of this by his par-

ents would send him to perdition, if dying within his moral infancy; cut off by God from His favor for what he could not prevent; which is unthinkable. But it is not necessary to regard baptism as a means of *salvation* in order to justify or explain it. Enough that it is a means of *grace* in the broader sense.

In this case the parents are not alone in the act. On the other side is the Church of God, represented by His minister, who accepts, in His behalf and that of the Church, the dedication of the infant by his parents. It is therefore also an act of love and faith on the part of the Church; and as certainly as in the case of the parents brings an attendant blessing. Still further, as saving grace has already made the child a member of the *invisible* Church, he is now made a member of the *visible* body; and of that *as a whole*, and not merely of the denomination to which the baptizing minister or his parents belong. That he can not as yet take any conscious part in its active life argues nothing against this. A babe in arms is no less a member of his family because he does not help in its work, or even know of his relationship to those about him. Regarding him in this light, I should rejoice to receive him into "the communion of saints." Our Lord, in giving to the apostle Peter the command, "Feed My lambs" (John xxi, 15), had in mind all ministers, and all children who might be brought within their care; and in no way can the pastoral duty be better acknowledged and begun than by this blessed ordinance. How the Church should regard and treat the child from this time forth we will discuss later.

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I do not forget that a great many excellent people are strongly opposed to infant baptism, and on grounds which they believe to be valid and sufficient for its rejection.

Some say that baptism should only follow on a conscious acceptance of Christ as a personal Savior, and that the proper order of the events is shown by His own words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi, 16). Those who practice infant baptism accept that teaching as fully as any, *when kept within its limits*. For everybody capable of faith for salvation that is the true order, and such faith is a proper condition to their baptism. But it is not so with the moral infant. If it was, then all who die within that period, not being able to believe, would be lost. Now they are not deprived of salvation, because they are incapable of faith; why should they be denied the sign of that grace which is theirs without believing?

Still it is urged that baptism is also a *profession* which the moral infant can not make for himself; then why baptize him? Because it is both right and rational for his parents and the Church so to declare his saved state for the glory of God and the good of men, and *without waiting until he can do this for himself*. It will then be answered that you can not imagine God as approving of any such course, to say nothing of requiring it. Can you not? Strange as it may seem to such reasoners, God has done that very thing in the ordinance of circumcision. Between this and baptism there are differences, but they do not affect this question; while there are likenesses which are vital to the understanding of it. It was commanded that Abra-

ham and his male descendants, throughout their generations, should be circumcised (Gen. xvii, 9-15); and this was to be done to the babe of eight days' age, with whom intelligent consent was impossible. Isaac was so circumcised (Gen. xxiv, 4). The interest of the Hebrew child in certain special covenant privileges only was immediately dependent upon it; but if it was willfully neglected, the parents were held to account; and if the child, coming to the knowledge of God's requirement, discovered that he had not been circumcised, it became his duty to seek it. The great point is, however, that Scripture here proves that, on occasion, God *can* and *does* command a thing to be done to the moral infant by his parents or others, and with a moral purpose, in which that infant can not take any intelligent part. Why should it not please Him as certainly to have a child who is saved by His grace sealed with the sign of it, as to have a Hebrew child sealed with the sign of a *special* covenant?

But there is no specific command for it? True; but there is not in Scripture a specific command given for every separate duty. With circumcision a new principle was introduced to Abraham as the father of a race. Christianity sprang up centuries afterwards among that same race; when the people, long familiar with the relation of the child to the *special* covenant, would naturally assume a similar relation to the *general* grace as expressed in the Christian religion, and, without a specific command, would follow a practice consistent with that belief. And it is impossible to prove that the first Christian



pastors did not baptize infants. There is every reason to believe that they did.

Still, would it not be better to leave it until the child could choose for himself? God did not think so about circumcision. But here the answer to the similar question about dedication also applies. Honor God by acknowledging His grace given to your child, so securing all possible blessing to him, and confirming your resolutions to further duty. When he can profit by it, tell him that you gave him to God in baptism as well as by private dedication; and explain that the sign was given because he was already saved by the grace. Will not this knowledge help him to continue under the same grace?

There are other objections made to infant baptism; but they may be as effectively answered as those just dealt with; and as they do not touch the subject as it stands related to the child's salvation, I will only offer you this general advice in relation to them all, that you will not suffer the perversions of infant baptism by any to turn you from being of those who do their duty fearlessly on right grounds.



## CHAPTER VIII

### Training: Purposes and Methods

You want your child, when he reaches the threshold of accountability, to realize his past and say: "God has saved me when I could not take care of my soul, and if I had died He would have taken me to be with Him in heaven forever;" and then to turn to his future and say: "I love Him for being so kind to me. I will now go on to be His good boy, and live always to please Him."

But he will have also the power to take the opposite course, and there will not be wanting influences set to turn him from God. Do not suppose that he will *drift* into the experience of continued salvation; for that will depend on his choice, just as his conversion would if he lived for a time in sin. The reflection and decision you desire can only arise from knowledge and feeling, the products of good teaching and influence, divine and human; and most of the human should be your own.

I have just used the term "conversion." This can only apply with one who has first *departed from* God, and later *turned back to* Him; and includes repentance, and faith for the pardon and cleansing *made necessary by that consciously sinful past*. In

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the child's case there is the same acceptance by God, and on the same general grounds; but his action must agree with his circumstances. So to distinguish these cases let us call the *act* of the child "*self-dedication*," and his *experience* "*the unbroken relation*."

Most people seem to regard the child as "all wrong" until he gets right by conversion at some time in the accountable state; not realizing God's work of grace during his moral infancy. The rest appear to think that the saved state continues without any action on his part, and that he is "all right" until he openly turns from God. In both cases the crisis is ignored, and no definite and suitable preparation for its being safely passed is made. It is *to prevent the possible departure from God*—which neglect will make, at least, highly probable—that you must set yourselves. You must continually have this purpose in view, and do all your thinking and praying, believing and working, consistently with it.

God says to us (Prov. xxii, 6), "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The word translated "train" means *to make narrow*, or *to limit*, and bears a natural relation to "way," which is our reading of another word which means *to be trodden*, and "path" would be a little nearer to our idea. In a moral sense it is *a course of life*. Now a path leads somewhere; this one leads to God and heaven. So the *training* of the child is to keep him in this well-marked path, *in* which he will walk with God, and *by* which he will at last reach His heaven.

The disappointments of many parents may seem

to throw doubt on the assurance that the child rightly brought up "will not depart" from the way. There is failure somewhere in all such cases; but it is not with God; it is with our weak and foolish humanity. Such failure may arise in our aims, or our methods, or in both. As to the main aim; with how many does this go beyond leading the child to a goodness that will insure his love and obedience to themselves, a greatness that is of this world only, a success that ends with a lot of money? How few have chiefly, or even seriously, in mind the glory of God and the highest and eternal good of the child.

Sometimes the aim is right, and still there is failure, because the child's needs are not understood, or the methods pursued are not suited to the ends sought. How many depend, for instance, upon a discipline of "do" and "do n't," ignoring the need of spiritual principles and powers, and of divine and human helps to make these effective? When, however, the aims are learned of God, and right methods are employed with constant vigilance, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, how great is the probability of success! And until the child has had the largest possible opportunity *in God's way*, his friends have no right to question the truth of the Word as quoted.

There is no comfort to be got from supposing that it promises a *deferred benefit*; so that, though the child may live long in evil, the training will come to his help some time and lead to his salvation. The testimony of the reclaimed wastrel, so often heard, "I could never get away from my mother's prayers," may be quoted in support; but

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this Scripture does not refer to such cases. God does not say that the child shall be brought back to the way, but that he shall not depart from it. The word is only for those who fulfill the conditions attached to it.

Your aims, however, are of God; how may they be brought to pass? *First, concentrate your thought and means upon them, and limit your training during his moral infancy to those forms which will most surely tend to the great purpose in view.* This will include, of course, all proper care of body and mind. "A sound mind in a healthy body" makes a good foundation for the spiritual building. Remember also that God wants your boy to be a *real, natural child*. But there is nothing in these that is in the least opposed to the course I advise; while by taking it you will make your duty and his more simple and easy than it can be made by any other in your power. The child will gain greatly; not only at the first and in the highest sense, but also later, and in the special preparations for school, social, business, and public life. His *moral* training will make the best *mental* grounding for the secular; and the earlier his moral principles are settled on the only true foundation, the less will they be in danger of being disturbed by contact with the evil of the world.

For this you will need *unity in view and principle, and co-operation* in practice. Therefore *study yourselves*; your characters, qualities, and powers, as these may affect your work and its results. The child owes to both of you his inheritance, physical, mental, and spiritual, and not to either alone. God has made you differently so that you may each fur-

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nish some necessary element or proportion of influence in his training. He gives to the typical father a strong nature for his part; and to the typical mother a tenderness of disposition for hers, fitting her especially to deal with the child in his early helplessness. These differences, and all others of *His making*, will work together for a true success if the parents will so resolve. Children, of both sexes alike, need the whole and the best influence of each parent. Take God as your pattern; for He combines the father's strength with the mother's tenderness; and, though you can only assume His *authority* in part, you can entirely and safely follow the perfect *principles* of His government and the directions and inspirations of His Word.

For the ends you seek you can not live too holy a life or be in too constant touch with God. Make all matters, *as they arise*, the subjects of praise and prayer. In everything about which there is not unmistakable direction in the Word and conscience, pray for *special* guidance, and wait for this rather than act in haste. Test all the suggestions that come to you upon such prayer by "the law and the testimony" of God; and if they agree with these and grow to clear convictions of duty, do not hesitate to follow them. Many of our saddest blunders are made with the best of intentions, even after severe exercise of our reasoning powers, and only because, in our self-sufficiency, we fail to inquire of God.

Make the home cheerful and reasonably comfortable and attractive, but let no ambition beyond these put the greatest interests in peril. Above all, let it be full of the sense of God's presence. Let its life be governed by the love of Him and each



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other. So will it be consecrated; and your child will have none but happy memories of it.

The immediate results to be sought by training are three; *love, faith, and obedience*. These he will need at the *threshold* to determine him to a right life; and together they constitute the *character, conduct, and achievement* for which God calls. They form the substance of holiness; they assure the happiness of earth and heaven. The *fall* came through man's failure in them. Hell is the eternal loss of them. Only by their recovery can man be restored to the likeness and favor of God. For that recovery grace is given through One who exercised them in His human nature towards His Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, and so made that human nature sinless; worthy to share with His divine nature in the redeeming sacrifice of Calvary, and to be our Example. The universal and perpetual work of the Holy Spirit is all to produce these three elements in human life. A true love of God leads us to love whatever He loves, and to hate whatever He hates. A true faith leads us to believe whatever He declares, and to reject whatever He rejects. Love and faith depend upon each other; without the completeness of either the other can not be complete. The only obedience that is acceptable to God springs out of their co-operation and can only come by His grace. To these it is God's purpose that you should lead your little one until they shall rule his life.

Now as to *methods*. There are *three forms of training*. *First, teaching*; the direct giving of knowledge and guidance by precept and example.



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But beyond what you so teach, the child will learn from everybody and everything about him. It is yours to see, as far as possible, that all is helpful, and so to treat the hurtful as to counteract its influence. *Secondly, discipline*; by which you impart knowledge and guidance through what is *done to* him, and *borne by* him, or *done by* him in the use of his own powers under the authority and direction of others. *Thirdly, personal influence*; arising out of the intense love, the vigorous faith, and the glad obedience of the parent-teachers to God; and their corresponding regard for the welfare of their child; together producing a contagious enthusiasm in which he will see the reality, blessedness, and greatness of the life of which they teach him more than from any other human means. The three methods overlap each other and co-operate. By teaching and discipline you keep the good before him, and the evil away from him; but the result will be defective in the absence of personal influence. The most careful of teaching and discipline will fail to meet his needs when he can not see that they are given *because his parents love both God and himself*. But use them all, and each at its best.

## CHAPTER IX

### Primary Lessons

THE training of your child must begin with his life. His very helplessness and dependence upon you will serve to this. For a time you will stand in the place of God to his consciousness; and you must so teach him to love, believe in, and obey you that it shall be easy to engage him to his Heavenly Father in a similar love, faith, and obedience when he comes to know Him. So you must justify such a feeling towards you and treatment of you as this requires, and then teach him that you deserve and expect it. This is God's way with us.

In the teaching of *love* you do not have to wait until you can tell the child by words how much you love him, to lead him to realize the fact, and secure his love in return. The smile and caress will soon teach him; and when, by and by, you say with these a hearty "I love you, boy!" he will learn to associate the familiar expression with your words, and both will give him pleasure. *Faith* is first learned by love. He will believe in you, in his child way, because of your evident love of him. In both the *personal influence* will be the most powerful factor.

*Obedience* must first be taught by discipline and,

until words are of use, by sign and action. Dependence and authority will soon become realities to him; and they can not be too early or thoroughly learned. He will find that he is placed here or there as somebody else chooses, and that he can not get away when he wants to, but must wait until he is taken up. Such experiences, repeated many times before he can settle them for himself, make good teaching and discipline; and the personal influence comes with the parent who brings him love and pleasure in place of the pain of waiting, it may be with struggling and crying. By these things he learns the *obedience of necessity*. He can not as yet connect obedience with love and faith. He will by and by.

Sooner or later will appear the manifestations of a *will*, which must be brought under discipline at once, even more for the good of the child than for the comfort of his parents. I remember how my daughter met her first battle when four months old. She had a trick, when suckling, of putting her hand between her face and her mother's breast which prevented her from reaching her food supplies, and then—worry. Her mother had to judge between the trick and the feeding which was best for the babe, and decided for the feeding. The tiny hand had to be put away again and again, and there was much stubborn fighting, in baby way, before her mother won the victory.

Many difficulties with the will arise in the days of infancy, varying with different children in number and persistency, but generally enough to call out the training powers of those in control. Very tenderly, but very firmly, must these be dealt with;

else that will, growing stronger with age, and even more by getting its own way, will clamor more and more for that way; at first with those in sight, later with the unseen God; and so—*misery*, and finally, if persisted in, unwilling subjection and never-ending misery. Here is not merely a question of “trick or feeding,” but one of *right or wrong*, which must needs enter into any issue between parent and child. That the child does not understand this, argues nothing. The parent, in God’s place and under His guidance, will use honest judgment and then rightly insist on the child submitting to it. It is sometimes difficult to enforce this; but whenever it is so, depend upon it the difficulty will increase with time, so that with the very cases in which it is greatest there is the greatest need of insistence. Many give way at the start under the feeling that it is cruel to contend with a little child, and with the hope of getting the mastery later, only to find the contests fiercer and the means necessary to subjection more and more painful to both parent and child. Believe me, the *earliest* settlement is the *easiest*.

Accompany your action with speech and expression; with “you must” or “you must not,” when needed, your face showing serious resolution; by sheer force of repetition it will grow on him that these all mean the same thing, and by and by the words and expression will serve without the action. Later the command should serve when the face can not be seen. The whole course should aim at subjection with as little of contention as is necessary to that end. By *contention* I mean the calm and steady use of power—moral, mental, and physical

—for the maintenance of authority; and this is kind, as choosing a little pain now, in preference to much more in the future; a momentary loss of pleasure in order to a greater and lasting satisfaction.

Now, in all such oppositions of the child's will to yours (when you are in the right) you are really contending with his inherited moral weakness, stirred up by the powers of evil, who hope to gain an advantage, even so early, by the formation of evil habits. When this thought distresses you, remember that the child's *present* salvation is not in danger, and that the Almighty Spirit is working through you and with you to the better end.

But there will also come, at such times, a strain upon his confidence in your love, and upon his love for you. He has learned to think of you with pleasure; now you give him pain, of mind at least. He will resent this, and—if nothing worse—will show less pleasure than usual at your presence and attentions. You would be glad to avoid this. You could, of course, hold his good-will for the time by letting him have his way in everything. But this would tend to make him, by and by, one of the sort who pout or whine or scold on every crossing of the will, with: "You do n't love me; you wo n't let me enjoy anything I want!" and with this—misery. He would come to judge the commands of God in the same way, and quarrel perpetually with every one of them that was not easy or pleasant to obey. How will he learn to love, trust, and obey his Heavenly Father, who will not tolerate evil in him when he becomes accountable, if his human guardians tol-



erate it now rather than put his love and faith under a temporary trial?

Now, since your right course in this is a difficult one, the problem becomes also a trial of your loyalty to God and faith in Him. Go, then, to Him for love and wisdom, for strength and inspiration for your *whole* duty. Ask Him to give you the victory and to make the experience a blessing to the child. Believe that He will do so; for without such a confidence in His interest in the outcome you can not do your best.

Then study the case from God's point of view. Disobedience is more than a wrongful resistance to rightful authority. In the *accountable* it is a failure of love and faith. Now, while your child has not yet reached that stage, he is on his way to it, and you must so deal with him now as to insure his having right ideas then. He must be piloted safely through his present confusion to the certainty that you really love him, and only subject him to discipline when it is for his own good.

Adopt God's attitude towards good and evil. He is faithful to righteousness and opposed to sin; but He is also willing to suffer *with* and *for* those who sin, that so He may lead them back to love, faith, and obedience. That is a true view of Calvary. Express, then, your approval of what is right, and disapproval of what is wrong; but let your child see that, in any case of wrongdoing, your patience is not indifference; that you suffer while you wait on his return to right-doing. When he is able to realize wrong-doing *as against you*, call for sorrow, confession, and renewal of love and faith *toward yourselves*, and let



him know that you can only forgive him when he has met these just requirements. If you have need to punish him beyond this, prayerfully consider all the circumstances, and measure the discipline justly. As to the necessity and wisdom of punishment, the Bible is plain (Prov. xxii, 15; xxiii, 13; xxix, 15, etc.). No small part of the insolence with which men presume to sin against God is to be explained by the impunity with which as children they sinned against their parents. Such come easily to think of God as a Father who will pay no heed to their sin. You must not allow your child to get any such false notion of Him by the way of his present experience with you.

You can, however, so administer the discipline as to give him, sooner or later, right views of it. When he gives way to you without punishment, he will discover that he has not really suffered by doing so. When he resists your will and compares your dealings with him then with those that go with submission, he will see the advantage of willing obedience. But he can only get a full conviction that you know what is best for him by the way of your faithfulness, proved by lessons consistent with your main aims and repeated as often as he needs them. That is how God teaches us; and when the human training follows His, the child will learn to regard all wise discipline as proof of love.

From a thorough grounding in the obedience of *necessity*, the child must gradually reach the sense of *moral obligation*, in which the "must" and "must not" link with the "ought" and "ought not," recognizing the *right* of parental authority and the wisdom of yielding to it. But as soon after this

as possible it must finally settle on love and faith, which furnish the highest grounds and strongest sense of obligation. For this, teach him: "I like to please you because I love you. You love me; will you please me?" This is no bargain-making, as if you had said: "I will please you *if* you will please me." That element should be kept out of your plans. The child's *love* must be free, not from obligation, but from unworthy motives and from all compulsion save that which is natural to love. It is, however, perfectly right to teach him that love is proved by obedience, and that when he does not care to please you it is plain proof that he does not love you as he ought. Christ so taught when He said: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John xiv, 15, 24, etc.). The earlier this is taught the more easily and effectually will it be learned. Do not be surprised to find him divided between pleasing you and pleasing himself, nor count it a total failure of his regard. It will take time and training to bring him to the point where your wish will take first place; and you must patiently work on till that be reached. A ready and hearty loyalty to you will be the best preparation for the larger loyalty to his Heavenly Parent.

In teaching *faith* as a reason for obedience, you can *believe in your child* after a most helpful fashion. You may well appeal to his honor as an encouragement to right-doing. But in order to the safe working of this, he must see justice and faithfulness in all your dealings with him and others; you must keep your word, of promise and warning alike. When he has learned to obey you because he loves and believes in you *fully*, you will natu-

rally give him a similar love and faith. He will deserve it. I do not mean that you will trust his judgment in matters beyond his capacity; but you will trust him to seek yours, and to carry it out. In no other way can mutual safety and confidence be more fully secured in family relations.

The child, however, has to do with other human beings besides yourselves. For his own sake as well as for theirs he must learn to love these; to be reasonable and unselfish, and to treat his elders with respect. He must be so trained as to find it easy to accept from God at the *threshold* the higher and broader obligations of His law of the love of all men as he loves himself. On the way to these he must learn that a true *self-love* does not claim more than its due; and you must see to it that he is not imposed upon and that he does not impose upon others.

While all this is going on, conscience will be forming, and all his experiences will be shaping his ideas of right and wrong. He must be protected, partly by keeping him out of the way of evil people and partly also by checking and, if needs be, openly resisting those whose example may lead him astray. If an immediate protest can not wisely be made, you can wait on a better time, and say to the child what may serve to counteract the mischief. Moreover, while always fulfilling the law of love to others, you should make *character* the great *test for respect*, and especially in the choice of those who, as your *friends*, will not only enter your home and help to determine its moral atmosphere, but will also show to your child the sort of people you like.

Following on the growth of conscience will

come his consciousness of the power to resist temptation. Yielding to your wishes when opposed to his own, and finding no reason to regret it, he may repeat the submission as often as the occasions arise. Every such experience is a gain, and will strengthen his inclination to good and resistance to evil in a degree proportionate to his ability to learn by it. Tell him, *warningly* when a fight is at hand, *approvingly* when it has been fought and won: "You *can* be a good boy if you choose." Gradually the idea will become fixed in his mind, and will join with conscience, both to bring in the conditions of accountability and to enable him to meet them. Keep in your view the unseen working of the grace of God, and pray for it and work with it through all this period.

Until the child learns of God, the product of such love, faith, and obedience as come through the power of the grace and right training and are exercised towards yourselves and human society, will be a general *child-goodness*, the promise of greater things to come with the growth of knowledge. For each of his later obligations to God there is a present one, of like character, to yourselves and others; and the more faithfully he is taught to fulfill the lesser duties now, the more easily will he be led to fulfill the greater when they come into his life.

## CHAPTER X

# Learning to Know God

WHEN will your child discover God? I can not tell. The experience may come before he has reached the stage of his growth I last described. As to the manner of it, God may reveal Himself in some direct way; but He generally employs human agency.

Take one line of probability. The child will hear the names of God spoken with seriousness. He should never hear them used carelessly, much more profanely, by any without being shown by your disapproval that such use is wrong. How shall he revere a God whose names he has heard bandied about thoughtlessly in common conversation?

These names he will hear when you gather and read reverently out of the Bible, and kneel, and he is required to be still and silent. One of you will speak, still reverently, to a Person whom the child can not see, but will sooner or later understand to be present and listening. What is this book? Who is this listener? Why this stillness and seriousness? He can not understand, but neither can he ignore it; unless, indeed, you allow him to wander about or play during worship, and so he misses the good of the occasion. Many parents question the necessity of such a repressive course with a child of tender years; but if it is put off it will be more



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difficult to carry it out later ; provoking greater resistance and causing more pain and weariness to all concerned. Will he not be liable to hate all occasions when his freedom of movement or speech is restrained, and become a nuisance in the family, the school, and the house of God? Is it so terrible a privation for his play to be suspended twice a day, for a short time, to teach him the highest things?

But why should he be made to take any part in that which he does not understand? Will it not tend to make him a hypocrite? No; but on the contrary, it will bring him *gradually* to *realize* God, and to a proper feeling and attitude towards Him. He does not *pretend* to worship; he learns the way; and the more sincerely and perfectly you do your worshiping and hold his attention to it, the sooner and more easily and fully will he learn to do likewise. Here is one of the strongest reasons for family worship. To the little ones it may be a powerful object lesson in knowing and dealing with God.

Public worship will have similar help for him; the same names, exercises, and reverence with those taking part; the same thinking and learning with him, and the discovery that other people than yourselves know and approach the Unseen One. But here comes the objector! "Children ought not to be taken to church until they know how to behave. They disturb the minister and congregation, and worry their mothers." I answer that the earlier a child is taken to church the easier will it be to keep him quiet. So deal with him in the first troubles as to teach him to be still; and then he will grow



up accustomed to the restraint, and gradually find his place in the worship.

He will some time observe that you get quiet seasons alone with God; and that you lift your hearts in prayer and song in the midst of your daily work. All these occasions, taken together, will impress him with the reality of God and of your relations to Him. When you see the questioning look in his eyes, tell him that at these times you are talking with God, or reading or hearing or singing about Him. He will not grasp the idea at first; tell him at every new occasion, until he gets it and links the name with the Unseen Listener of his first lessons .

Then teach him to pray for himself. That, in its order, will bring God to his consciousness more powerfully than anything else. How shall you teach him? Tell him first some simple facts about God and himself that will lead to the act of prayer, and dwell upon each until he is sure of it. Tell him that God is good. This he will understand by what it is for him to be good; and, though this conception falls infinitely short of the reality with God, it is true as far as it goes, and is ample for a beginning. Then, God loves him; he will understand this by your love. He knows that you want him to love you, and now God wants him to love Him; and you want this, too. We are commanded to teach this diligently to our children (Deut. vi, 5-7). He knows that you want him to be good; next, so does God, and He can make him good. God is present; will he ask Him? Turn these ideas into prayers. Kneel with him and prompt him. He need not know *how* God does it; but *in this way*

he will learn that God *can do it*. The Spirit will answer his prayer by a conscious *good feeling* which he can enjoy without understanding it. This may be unusual; but, if so, why? Mainly because the children are taught to use forms rather than to pray in terms of their own desires. Let me tell you something that I read lately in a Church paper. A minister stated that he visited a home where the father was accustomed to scoff at Christianity. The mother had been brought up religiously and had not lost her convictions. She told her visitor that her little boy, when not more than five years old, startled her one day by saying, with a sneering tone: "I do n't believe in this Jesus Christ they talk about. I never saw Him, I never heard Him; I do n't believe there is any such person." Knowing from whom he had learned this, she was much distressed; but, controlling her feelings, answered him: "There *is* a Jesus, and if you speak to Him, He will answer you." He put the case to experiment. Opening the door, he called loudly: "Jesus! Jesus!" After listening awhile he came back to his mother with: "He did n't answer me. There is n't any Jesus." The mother replied: "But you called with a loud voice. If you want Him to answer, you must call gently." He opened the door again and called softly: "Jesus! Jesus!" Instantly he turned, and fairly flew to his mother. His face was radiant with a new light as he exclaimed: "Mamma! There *is* a Jesus, for He answered me. I heard Him." "From that time," said his mother, "he has firmly believed in Jesus." Be sure that none are more certainly answered of God than little children who *really pray* to Him.

Now your child, rightly taught, will be likely to tell you that God makes him good when he prays. Then tell him that, if he wants God to do this *all the time*, he should go often to Him. So lead him to ask and expect more good, and yet more good, until that thought of *prayer with a purpose* is well fixed in his mind and heart. After each experience of the good feeling teach him to thank God for it; for He calls for thanksgiving with our requests (Phil iv, 6); and this is as right for the child as for anybody. Show him how kind it is of God to make him welcome at all times and answer his prayers. Lead him to regard it as a *privilege*, and not merely as a *convenience*. When he has a firm hold on the central idea of each petition, suggest another. Encourage him to reach out for himself, to bring temporal and passing interests; and in praying about these, always to ask God for such good, *if it please Him*, and so to learn that highest form of trust which is not afraid to leave all uncertain matters to His choice. If he brings a usable idea, say: "Now pray for that;" if his idea is cloudy, clear it; if it is mistaken, correct it. You may not be able to explain the difficulty; but you can point out the right course, even though it be only to pray for guidance and wait till he gets it. At family worship mention him by name, with praise and prayer in the terms of his current use. That will show your interest and confirm his desire and expectation. In all his approaches to God train him to be honest; to say what he means, and mean what he says; otherwise he will fall into a hurtful formalism, which God forbid! It will help to prevent this if you suggest new wordings of his pray-

ers, and it will also enlarge his mind and freshen his interest.

From the time that he knows that whatever grieves you also grieves God, call him, immediately upon anything of the kind, to prayer for His forgiveness, in addition to seeking yours. He can do this before he knows anything of faith in Christ; indeed, with this the practice will form a strong and useful link.

The *Fatherhood* of God will be readily learned from his human father, who must therefore truly represent Him. The *Creatorship* of God must come to strengthen His authority and increase the child's sense of dependence and obligation. You will find ample material in the great kindergarten of nature.

God as *lawgiver* may be brought into his knowledge by a link with your own government. You have been directing and forbidding, saying, "Do this," and "Do not do that;" and he has learned to obey you. So also God says "Do" and "Do not," as it is His supreme right to do; and we must *all* obey, even father and mother. He must then realize that your lives are made up of glad and continual obediences. Then *all* of God's laws are good and kind, and it is right and wise of us to keep them. These facts once within his grasp, you can tell him what God says about the things you wish him to do or avoid, supporting your own authority by the divine, and then making this the *chief* ground of direction. You will properly teach him that the Fifth Commandment and others require him to obey you (Ex. xx, 12; Eph. vi, 1-3; Col. iii, 20). But remember that if your child is to obey you "*in all things*," God will hold you to account as sinning

against both Himself and the child, if you require of him anything contrary to His will.

*Right* and *wrong* have become familiar to the child in his dealings with you. Carry these into their relations to all God's laws, and make it clear that nothing is right or wrong simply because God says so, but that He calls it so because it is so *of itself*; and that when we can not judge for ourselves we can depend on His judgment and Word. Right is to be loved and followed, both because God loves and follows it, and because it is best for us all; and wrong must be feared, hated, and avoided for the opposite reasons. Then, too, God is honored, just as you are, by his right-doing, and dishonored if he does wrong. The will and glory of God are thus bound up with his own interests.

Thus far, however, the child only knows of God as one Person. He must find a like consciousness of His Son as Jesus Christ, whose humanity will bring Him wonderfully near to the child-nature. He will learn of Him as coming into this world as a little child like himself; then as a growing boy, who astonished learned men by His knowledge and yet was not above obeying His human mother; by and by rising into a splendid manhood, in which little children found Him a friend who would not allow even His best men friends to drive them away from Him, but took them up into His lap, put His hands on them and blessed them. If he had been there Christ would have done that to him. From such a starting point it will be easy to go on to the Savior's teachings, especially those about children, and to His miracles. The story of the Cross must be connected with the goodness and love of God,



and the evil and need of men ; and he must see that Christ died that we might be saved and made good ; that He died for him as much as for anybody ; and that this is *the greatest proof of God's love for him*. If this is rightly told it will melt him to tears and fill his swelling heart with resolves to love, believe in, and obey Him forever. Then the resurrection and ascension, the intercession and reconciliation, the greatest happiness possible *to him* in this world and the world to come ; all will be easy to believe. He will not want to explain away the miracles or discount the assurances.

From the Divine Son you can go on to teach him of the Divine Spirit, whom he should realize as carrying forward the work of Christ in the world and as loving little children who, through His influence, want to be good, leading them in the right life and enabling them to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. He will become very real when He is discovered to be the *immediate* source of all his own good feelings and right doings, and he will be quite ready to believe that the life of his soul is of His giving.

When your child has learned of Jesus Christ, teach him to pray to Him *as God* ; and so to the Holy Spirit, when He comes into his view ; and then gather the three Persons into his thought as *one*, as "my God." When he finds, with all these changes of address, the same blessing in answer, his faith will be secured as it could not be by any statement of the doctrine of the Trinity unsupported by such experience. His ideas of worship will be complete when he learns that his praises and prayers will be, from that time, acceptable only as they are



inspired by the Holy Spirit and presented to the Father through Christ. Teach him all this, and as much more as he can receive; it will help to increase his love, faith, and obedience to his God as He grows before his spiritual vision from day to day, until his devotion shall greatly exceed that which he gives to you, and ever increase.

A word as to the use of song. You can sing for him from the outset, but it is not wise to encourage him to sing even the simplest of hymns until his knowledge is abreast of them. Then they should be explained, or they will easily become formal, absurd, or merely religious playthings. He must no more *sing* than *say* words without honestly meaning them. But, so treated, they will greatly help him to enjoy his growing consciousness of God and His loving will for him.

Remember that the reception and use of all this knowledge is not wholly dependent on your capacity for teaching it, or the child to learn of you. The Spirit's power and working, both in you and in him, must be claimed and counted on; and who can measure His possibilities? They alone explain the Savior's thanks to His Father because He had revealed these things unto babes (Matt. xi, 25; Luke x, 21); and His use of Psalm viii, 2 (Matt. xxi, 16): "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

Perplexities will arise; do not discourage him from bringing them to you. Deal with them prayerfully. If the necessary explanations are beyond his understanding, frankly say so; but give him such practical direction as he immediately needs. But send him, as he grows, more and more to God for direct help.

## CHAPTER XI

### At the Threshold

IF we can not tell at what stage of the knowledge of *human* relations God will come into the child's view, neither can we predict how soon afterwards the crisis of moral choice will arise; and for the same reason, that we can not know the *special* purposes of God, and what He will do *directly* to bring them to pass. The one question which your child will then have to settle will be whether he will give himself to God for the continuance of his saved relation to Him; and whenever his *knowledge* and the *convictions* wrought by the Holy Spirit are, together, *sufficient to that settlement*, the crisis will come. In one instance the convictions may come with less of knowledge than in another, and may take the place of what would have been taught later by the parents. The Spirit can teach independently and in advance of human work. One blessed certainty we have, that He will not thrust upon the child his responsibility one moment before he is able to meet it. If your training is in line with the child's capacity, let not the coming of the crisis distress you. What remains to be taught by you can follow with all usefulness.

You will see, however, that I can not deal with all imaginable cases that may arise; I will there-

fore assume that you have done your duty, and that the child's knowledge is sufficient to bring Christian accountability at the same time with the general moral form of the experience. These assured, you may see clearly the great advantages of your training and the work of the Spirit of God. For here the child has not only the benefits of an unconditional salvation, but also, running parallel with it, the experience of a conscious adoption of God's will, *step by step*, as he has learned it. In either case he is safe for a happy eternity if he dies within his moral infancy; but if he should live beyond this *without the training* he would enter on his accountable state at a disadvantage proportionate to his ignorance of God and good, and his familiarity with evil.

Though you can not tell when the threshold will be reached, God knows; and if you ask Him, He will guide you to say and do at all times the things suitable to the case. The child will not *of himself* recognize it as a *crisis*, even when it comes; but you will have seen it in that light all the time; and it is a part of your duty to show him that it is such and to impress him with the serious consequences of his course for good or evil, as he may take the right or the wrong direction.

Do not expect the occasion to be marked by *extraordinary* providential manifestations. Such may or may not arise; but when they do not, you may be sure that they are not necessary to the result. Leave these to God; watch for the regular signs, and be ready to work in harmony with them.

First among these will be the evident *growth of conscience and of the conscious power to choose be-*

*tween right and wrong.* Teach him to judge for himself of the character of the influences that will now be *specially* working for the helping or hindering of a right decision. The good Spirit is endeavoring to engage those developing powers to the life of holiness; Satan is seeking them for the life of sin. With the work of the Spirit he is familiar; he ought now, if not before, to learn of Satan as tempting him to evil and discouraging him from good, and as using for his foul designs not only fiends, but also human agents in various guises. The temptations presented to one so instructed and guarded and thus far responsive to good, will not likely be to the openly vile, or bristle with outspoken defiances to God. They will rather be cunning, Satan presenting himself as an "angel of light" (1 Cor. xi, 14), and following his old policy of Eden, the main principle of which is common to all forms of temptation. His one purpose is to prevent, or allure from, all love, faith, and obedience to God. Now, while you will shield your child in all wise ways, you can not cut him off from all the temptations that are specially calculated to confuse and warp his judgment at the crisis. Realize the power of evil, and reveal it to him as far as is needful; but do not get into a panic nor suffer him to do so. Your love must be wise as well as faithful. It will not be effective without the calm trust which is assured that the God who has thus far saved your child is able and ready now to give him the victory over all his foes. Help him with the contagion of that faith in *a supreme effort of personal influence*. Now will his confidence, gained by your care of his spiritual interests, be of great avail. Whatever

there may be of independence, inseparable from his development, he will turn at this time to you. Then do you turn him more and more to God.

Another sign will be his evident grasp of the knowledge necessary to his accountability for accepting Christianity. When he realizes that he has been all along, and is then, saved of God through the death of Christ and the work of the Spirit, he is drawing near to the *threshold*. Show him then that this relation *ought* to continue all through his life here and hereafter, that God wills it, and that it is for his unspeakable advantage. Tell him of his *dedication* and *baptism*, and clearly explain the purposes of these. Proceed to show him that he must *now give himself to God*; that while we all belong to Him by right, He yet requires us to do this as an act of love and faith towards Him, proving these by obedience, and that He is giving him more and more a will of his own, that he may choose to do His will. In the absence of any temptation to the contrary, he will respond to this teaching and give himself to God. Look for this, help him to it by your faith.

But he will probably be tempted at this point to refuse or delay his duty; and in such case the crisis must needs wait on such an understanding of the nature and tendency of the temptation as will render him accountable for his action in regard to it. He may be tempted to think that he has a natural right to please himself, and that there is no telling what God will want him to do or sacrifice if he gives up his life fully to Him. If his conscience is not already so instructed as to show the evil of this thought and fear, he will need help. The Spirit will



speak; but so must you. How well it is that you can now remind him that, often as he has given up his way for your sake, you have never taken any unkind advantage of his confidence, but have all the more planned to help and please him because he trusted you. So it will be, and more fully and certainly, with his Heavenly Parent, who loves him infinitely more than you can do. The willingness to make an acceptable surrender of his will can only come by love and faith; but he has already been exercising these with increasing consciousness of choice. Everything is in his favor.

The rightly-trained child will know that to hold to God and good will assure him happiness and satisfaction, and that to take the opposite course will cause him the loss of these. Satan will deny this and urge that there is greater happiness in a life of assumed independence of God; the old lie of Eden. If this appears, set before him the whole case. Honestly admit that there is a kind and degree of pleasure in the thought, and even in the commission of some forms of sin; but show him that this can only last until the character of the sin, and its evil consequences in personal damage and the wrath of God, are realized. It was so with our first parents. The forbidden fruit was so attractive in appearance, and the assurance of real and lasting advantage from eating it was so confidently given, that they ventured into the sin. Then were their eyes opened, indeed; not to happiness, however, but to curse and pain and shame. This is typical of the results, earlier or later, of all sin. Set against the limited and fleeting pleasure that which is true and abiding, which comes from the



doing of right and the smile of God upon it. The constant disapproval of his Heavenly Father should appear to him as a thing to be feared and avoided. He would be sad, indeed, under yours. Carry forward the favor and the disfavor in their continuance within the next world, and assure him that, while the one can give him eternal joy, the other must, with his self-condemnation, create eternal misery. Teach him whatever is clearly shown by the Word; not forcing a literal meaning upon it when there is reason to regard it as speaking figuratively, nor treating the figures as weak or meaningless. Neither Christ nor the inspired writers used any type that did not represent a reality. The sentence of God's judgment on each person capable of moral choice will be determined by his declaring for good or evil in his own probation. We may believe, if we will, that the blessedness of the saved and the misery of the lost will be, *in degree*, according to God's knowledge of them and their possibilities; but when we have reduced the whole question to the simplest conceptions consistent with Scripture, we still know that, whatever heaven means, it is good, and we want our children to enjoy it; and whatever hell means, it is evil, and we want them to avoid it. Now, if it is right to use heaven as an attraction to a holy life, it must be equally so to employ hell as a means of turning from evil. So did Christ and His apostles, and you can safely follow them.

When the child knows that self-dedication to God is his duty and advantage, and that to withhold it can not be other than wrong, he is surely at "the parting of the ways." When, judging by the signs

and confirmed by the Spirit's guidance, you believe him to be so, your next duty is to bring him to such tests as will settle it beyond doubt, and to make these as helpful as possible to a right course. They should be made calmly and tactfully, else you may hasten a wrong decision by your very anxiety to prevent it. Seek the necessary preparation and direction from God; do nothing without these. Some special providence may open your way; circumstances beyond your control may affect your action; but your natural line of movement may be easily seen and followed.

The teaching of duty and the call to it ought to suffice. He can not help choosing. Conscious neglect or intentional delay will be a choice, and the wrong one. Yet he may not see either to be so. It may seem to be merely a "taking of time to consider the matter," with a half-formed purpose to attend to it soon. Of the courses possible, none is so *seemingly harmless* and so *really dangerous* as this putting off of the duty. If this is his mind, show him that, as it is wrong to neglect or delay obedience to you, so it is, in a higher degree and with more serious consequences, to do so with God, who is now waiting on his obedience. Ask him to take it at once to Him in prayer, that he may be enabled to do it. His past use of prayer will help him; and if he takes it to God the matter is virtually settled, for He will say to him what he just then needs to that end.

He may, however, be tempted not to do this. If so, you may then ask: "Why do you not wish to talk to God about it? You have been used to do so about other things. Is it not the right way in this?"

To such questioning he can scarcely fail to give you some useful clue. If he is waiting on a special occasion, show him that it can never be better done than when he first sees that he ought to do it.

If he still delays, point out that, if he will not pray about it, God will understand that he is unwilling to love and believe in, and obey, Him any longer. This should be your last resort, taken only when you have exhausted all other right means and have no doubt as to his moral choice being in exercise. It should be a help to him. In the face of it, only a resolute purpose could make him persist in neglect. I am persuaded that in very few instances would a child *so trained* deliberately turn from God in this way; and I have only pursued the matter to this point to meet a possible need. Somewhere along this route any hindrance may be discovered and dealt with. So I will gladly return to the more probable experience.

The child in self-dedication gives himself to God with all his love, faith, and other powers, for time and eternity, in the name of Christ and by the grace of the Holy Spirit. This is *the act of love*. He must also believe that God, for Christ's sake and by His Spirit, accepts his dedication and seals afresh his salvation; that he is saved now, not as heretofore without his choice, but because *by grace* he chooses to continue his relation to God forever. This is *the act of faith*, and corresponds to that which is exercised by an accountable sinner in conversion. God, on His side of this covenant, proceeds to fulfill His gracious promises and gives the witness of His Spirit to His acceptance of the child.

Having made this clear to him; whether you shall be with him at the time of his dedication must be determined by divine guidance. If permitted, pray *with* and guide him as you may, but give him all the time he needs for direct dealing with God. If forbidden, pray *for* him elsewhere, and trust him to the care of the Holy Spirit. There are some advantages in taking the great step *alone with God*. For one thing, no after doubts can be built upon the notion that you over-persuaded or misdirected him at that time.

When he can tell you that God has accepted him, join with him in hearty thanksgiving. Mention it in family prayer, speak of it often enough to encourage him by your evident confidence. Teach him to thank God for it at every fresh approach to Him, and *especially for the unbroken relation*. So dwell upon this as to impress him with its unspeakable value, and that he may make it his life-resolve that it shall never be broken, but strengthened day by day. The godly on earth, the glorified "spirits of the just made perfect," and the angels, will all rejoice with him and with you; and in the heart of Infinite Love there will be an infinite joy because His purpose and yours has been blessedly fulfilled.

Here, then, is the experience of a child crossing the *threshold* in a saved state, and able, with its continuance, to declare that he can not remember the time when he was not sure of God's favor and his own safety. When such witness is based, not on the consciousness of *spiritual influence* merely, or on the absence of *conscious apostasy*, but on the merits of Christ and the work of the Spirit, retained

by self-dedication, and the life is found in plain agreement with this, it can be accepted without hesitation.

And now, in view of all that has passed, let me ask, At what conceivable time can the greatest question of all life be so easily and satisfactorily settled as at the threshold of accountability? We may allow the findings of recent observers as to certain periods within which souls are more easily brought to God than at other times *within accountability* by the co-operation of external influences with internal conditions ; but if, in the case of any child of godly parentage, more of the former are ready to help him, or his mind, heart, and will are more ready to respond to the divine call at any other point in life's course than this, it can only be through the failure, and to the unutterable shame, of those whom God has called to lead him to conscious salvation.



## CHAPTER XII

### Perils, Possibilities, and Profession

THE work of grace done at the *threshold* does not put the spiritual state of the child beyond the possibility of a change. With the coming of accountability he enters on a *probation*. He is now capable of *voluntary sin*, as distinguished from the evil of ignorance of his moral infancy. Satan will not give up the hope of turning him from his God. There is a life-long battle to be fought and won. The price of his continued liberty is "eternal vigilance." But "forewarned is forearmed," and with this the first help to his safety is provided. He must see his dangers clearly; but also as *always conquerable* when met bravely in the strength of his Lord.

Moreover, you have yet more to teach him, and he has still more to learn. He is not only in a higher grade with advanced studies, but also learning under new conditions. *He can not stand still*; lead him on. Give him the divine promises and warnings. Translate into child language such passages as 1 Cor. x, 13; Matt. xxvi, 41; and tell him stories of successful Christian living by little people.

There are, however, two perils, *special* to his case. The *first* is that, not having known any con-



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scious opposition to God, he may easily lay this to a supposed native goodness. But you know that all his good has been the product of grace, either working directly, or through your training and other helpful external influences. You must now guard him by your assurances that his past and present goodness would have been impossible apart from the sacrifice of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, and that he will always be dependent on these divine powers.

The *second* danger is of his being led to assume that, with such a beginning, he need not be so careful to learn God's will or so watchful against temptation as he must have been after a life of sin. His familiarity with divine leadings and his past readiness of obedience will not relieve him of the need of care and watchfulness; his advantage from these will be in the ease and success with which he can exercise them, when he does so promptly and faithfully in the power of God. Failure in these will bring failure in spiritual life, and as surely with him as with anybody. Of these things he has need to be carefully taught and often reminded.

From his perils I gladly turn to his possibilities in grace. With the precautions given, his constancy to God will be sustained. Grace will always be ready and sufficient. Those who are early saved hold their Christian life more generally than those converted later. Mr. Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher of London, used to say that though, with his large church membership, he had often to administer discipline, he had never had to do so to any who had become believers in childhood.

Under his new covenant conditions the child is

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called upon to love God with all his "heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Deut. vi, 5; Matt. xxii, 37); and as these expand they must be kept full of love and exercised in it. But this depends on a corresponding and growing faith, as the faith does, in its turn, on the love. From them will spring a full and hearty obedience. One who saw much of the Rev. Alfred Cookman, both in public and private, has said that his life was "a continual 'Yes' to his Heavenly Father." He was converted in childhood. I am sure that, other things equal, the earlier the acceptance of grace the greater will be the ease of securing such an experience. For this, therefore, the *unbroken relation* will be the best of all encouragements. This covers the reality variously described as *holiness, the higher Christian life, perfect love, entire sanctification* and *Christian perfection*. I find nothing in Scripture, reason, or observation to suggest any difficulty special to the case of the child. Perfection is as possible to the babe as to the full-grown man. If completeness and proportion of parts, capacity, health, and natural growth of body, mind, and soul are present, there surely is perfection, without regard to age or stage of development. Maturity comes only with growth, but this is most rapid in the life that is already perfect.

The child is also called to a true love of himself (as inferred) and to a similar love of all men (as commanded) in the second of the great laws (Lev. xix, 18) confirmed by Christ (Matt. xxii, 39; Mark xii, 31; Luke x, 27): "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." For this he must enter into God's will for both, as arising out of His love and

## Perils, Possibilities, and Profession 83

ministering to His glory, and believe in Him as being wise and strong to accomplish His purpose. Then he will be willing to take whatever task God gives him and do it in His power, looking to Him for guidance as to the *when*, the *where*, and the *how* of the doing; and, having done it at his best, will come to Him again and cheerfully ask, "What next, Father?"

If you ask, "What can a child do?" I answer, anything that God sets him to do. He will not give him tasks beyond his natural powers without also providing special influences or co-operating agencies sufficient to the purposes in view. He is too greatly concerned for the child to do him a wrong, and for the success of His plans to imperil them by using an unsuitable agent. Trust Him, then, to use the child as His infinite love and wisdom see fit, and to protect him by His infinite power from harm in the using. Fearlessly engage his heart in a true sympathy for all in sin and need. Tell him of children who have been made the means of helping others to love God. He will soon have experiences of his own to tell. The great and good seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, who became a Christian in childhood, soon afterwards began to form the purposes which grew into a career unexcelled in religious and philanthropic usefulness. His wealth and rank were but helpful circumstances; he was one of those who, having love and faith, will, in the absence of special advantages, still find ways to help humanity. If your child be not called to do great things, let him do the little ones; nobody can tell to what they will grow. They often exceed in fruitfulness the more ambitious efforts. Do not

suffer any to discourage him. Advise and guide him, but do not hinder a true service. Teach him to work under the direction of older Christians. In the spirit of Hannah, take him to his pastor and suggest that when he knows of anything that the Lord has for one of His little boys to do, here is a willing one. Among the forms of work possible to him, I feel sure that God will use him in helping to bring the blessing of the *unbroken relation* into the lives of other little children. Parents desiring this will welcome his example and influence in their homes; and it is impossible to tell how much good he may do among the children of the unsaved.

The child should now be received by the visible Church *as a Christian by personal choice and God's acceptance*, and as publicly as he was received at his baptism. The pastor should, of course, satisfy himself of the reality of the work of grace; but when this is assured there should be a hearty welcome. Before his fellow believers he should be encouraged to state his experience and purposes of life, and be enrolled as an active member of the Church. In everything he should be treated with full respect and consideration. Is he not a son of the Great King, an heir of heaven? The appearance of such a child before the Church for the recognition of his relationship to God, can never fail to awaken in me a thrill of joy mingled with holy awe. I am honored to receive him as a prince to whom the knowledge of his high dignity has recently come. He must see in me a true representative of his Royal Father; and I must remember that in him I am receiving his Lord and mine (Matt. xviii, 5). He should retire from the reception not

only with an enlarged sense of his sonship to God, but also with such a consciousness of his standing among the children of the divine family as will make his movements among them confident and comfortable. He must feel that he belongs to it.

It is now his right to share in all *spiritual* privileges, and particularly he can not be barred on any Scriptural grounds from the Lord's table. In the Sunday-school he will receive the usual progressive instruction, in the preparation for which you should help him. Welcome his teacher as his own special visitor, and counsel with this friend as a co-worker. He ought also to belong to a class in which his spiritual experience can be directly cultivated and his churchly obligations taught him *with others of like standing*. And, further, he should have frequent opportunities of hearing the prayers and testimonies of older Christians, and of giving his own among them. In all he should learn to bear his witness modestly and to give the glory of all his good to God.

But, whatever the Church may do for your child, it will still be your privilege to be his most loved and trusted counselors. With continued faithfulness the spiritual relation between you and him will grow stronger every day.



## CHAPTER XIII

### The Alternative Experience

I HAVE been dealing thus far with the case as it ought to be. But you are wondering what you should do if, through error or defect of yours, the loving care you expend should fail to secure with your child the maintenance of the *unbroken relation*. You must not let any fear of this hurtfully affect your faith or training; but neither must I leave you without guidance and encouragement for the possible event.

By whatever route the child reaches his decision, it settles the question for the time being, and on the wrong side. Every following moment is laden with the guilt of conscious opposition to God, for upon every reminder he finds himself still on the same line of direction. He will probably give the matter as little thought as possible, but in that very unwillingness to consider it justly, there is sin.

He has scarcely resolved never to be a Christian. He most likely intends to be one some day, when the immediate ends of his delay are secured; or he may simply let the whole matter drift. Knowing your love, and your wish that he should be right with God, he will probably try to keep his purpose to himself; and even practice little arts of evasion, not so much to deceive you as to save you from the pain that he knows his course must cause. And

you may be tempted to meet this with a corresponding reserve, and *in silence* to cherish the hope that his case will prove to be less serious than at first you feared. Do not so deceive yourselves, nor suffer anything to deceive you. *God is not deceived*, but views this delay of duty with absolute disapproval. His holiness is at issue with it. This is no time for you to be at ease about it. Failure in your duty will bring you also under condemnation. Neither, on the other hand, is it a time for panic. You need all your powers for better use, and a calm but resolute and persistent action. There is still strong reason to hope that you will soon bring him to the desired good, and the sooner you set yourselves to this the greater will be the probability of success. Remember that both the power of habit and the hardening effect of evil will grow with the fast passing days. Resolve that you will save as much as possible of his life from Satan and sin for God and righteousness.

Give yourselves to earnest study of the case and to prayer. If you have failed in personal obligation, seek forgiveness and reinstatement in parental privilege and influence. Then to the belated duty.

If you have neglected to dedicate him to God, do this next. He belongs to you as much as ever, and you can not begin your efforts to turn him back to his Heavenly Father better than by that act of love and faith. In answer, God will work *special*ly on him by His Spirit and providence. Ask Him whether you shall do it apart from or in the presence of the child, and follow fearlessly His direction of your judgment.

The neglect of baptism can not be dealt with

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in the same way. That rite can not, from this time, be properly administered until he has renewed his saving relation to God.

If you have failed somewhere in his training, my earlier suggestions will show where the error or omission was made, and also the course to be pursued, so that I need not repeat them. Bring up any arrears of instruction and personal influence that will be helpful to his conversion (for this term now comes into its proper use).

He must first listen to the Spirit's voice and yield to His workings. Then he must be honestly sorry for having turned from and grieved God, and for every wrong arising out of the rebellion; and turn back to Him with confession of his sin and declaration of his right purpose for all the future. He must ask for pardon, cleansing, and the new life, and believe that God, for Christ's sake and by His Spirit, grants him restoration to His likeness and favor, and to love, faith, and obedience. Pursue this teaching until he sees it clearly, then turn all your endeavors to bring him to the *doing*. Believe that the Spirit is working *with* and *through* you, as well as directly on the child, and you will then have confidence in the result and press your own efforts accordingly.

He will probably continue, at least for a time, in the good habits formed during his training, and be kind, truthful, and so forth. It may be difficult to see that these fruits of the earlier care are not acceptable to God; but they certainly are not, for he refuses to adopt the supreme motives from which they should spring. They show him to be still capable of doing right; but, as he will not do

it in the chief issues, they only become grounds for his just condemnation.

If, however, he continues in his present way, definite expressions of the evil of his course will arise sooner or later; and of these you must take notice, not only by discipline, but also by showing him their character as proof that his heart is wrong and that his habits are following its sinful direction. Press upon him the consequences of the first open sin. It will be eternally true that he has committed it. No power, even of God, can undo that fact or make his life as if it had not been done. Here is a true story that will help you: A little boy, the child of godly parents, resisted all their efforts to lead him to the right life. He also fell into the habit of using profane words. Discipline failing to correct this, his father adopted a plan to shame him by showing how often his habit led him into sin. He took him to a post in the garden, and said: "Every time, Willie, that I know of your saying a bad word, I shall drive a nail into this post." The boy seemingly paid no heed. The nails grew in number, until a revival came, in the course of which he gave his heart to God. His father then promised to remove a nail for each day in which he kept from his evil habit. Willie held to God and grace, and watched the disappearance of the nails. On the drawing of the last, the father, turning from the doing, found the boy in tears, and exclaimed in surprise: "Why, Willie! I thought you would be glad." "So I am, Papa," he answered with a sob, *"but all the holes are still there."* Apply this also to his refusal to give his heart and life to God, which, as long as it continues, holds him

in sin. The sooner he turns to God the less of sin will he have to grieve over. Keep before him the danger from the hardening by sin and the settling of evil habit in the very putting off of duty, and the eternal consequences of them all if they be persisted in. Above and beyond all this, keep before him the love and care of the Heavenly Father refused, the love and sufferings of the Savior rejected, the love and strivings of the Spirit resisted. Illustrate this by your own love and care, disappointment and grief, assuring him that God cares infinitely more about it than you can do. This should appeal most powerfully to him. Repeat your acts of love and faith until they succeed. Seize upon every providential and gracious circumstance that can be used. Gladly welcome every human help that is evidently of God's sending; but never cease to pray and believe that He will give you the joy, after all, of being the most influential of all His human agents in the winning of this precious soul.



## CHAPTER XIV

### Last Words

WE have now brought the little child to the boundary of his experience, where it touches that of the general body of believers. Save as his further development must be forwarded by helps suited to his still growing capacities, there is nothing in it that calls for further discussion.

Looking backwards over the *way* in which he has been *trained*, and realizing its harmony with the will of God and the evidences of His blessing upon the child in it, you can now believe that *he will not depart from it*. Delightful would it be to trace the benefits throughout a long and honored life; but we can not know the measure of his days in this world, nor the various conditions and circumstances that may enter into it. So, being unable to forecast these, let me strengthen your hearts by such assurances as are grounded upon the infinite holiness and unchangeable faithfulness of God.

While we have been discussing the possibilities of his future, your little one has only grown a few days older. The babe that you have dedicated to God with so noble and blessed an enthusiasm, with such fullness of love and confidence, may pass from your sight before you can carry his training to the *threshold* and *self-dedication*. If so, your hearts will be rent, but not your faith. You will be disappointed of your earthly opportunities, but not of

your heavenly expectations. The angels will bear away his ransomed spirit to the presence of his Lord. The best of care will be taken of him. *Heaven is a perfect home.* Judging by what we can see of God's plans for this world, I believe that he will not be bound to an eternal infancy or immaturity, but will grow in all ways. And since it would have been your duty to train him if he had continued with you, I can not doubt that he will be trained there. *Heaven is a perfect school.* Your dedication will not be in vain. Baptism will be the sign both of his state of grace here and of his state of glory there. God will but have taken your will for the deed, and a constant blessing will rest upon you here and upon your child yonder because of it. By and by you will find him, and rejoice together forever. This teaching is very real to me. Our second child was only lent to us for a few days. You can now understand our happy interest in the salvation of the moral infant.

But, whatever the length of his life here, it may, in the way I have described, be filled fullest of good and raised to its highest possible level, while his life in heaven will be its eternal continuance in a bliss that is not dimmed by the memory of a moment's estrangement from God, and a service that can not suffer by any loss of efficiency through the influence of sin. It is the most perfect form of our most blessed hope. And of all our efforts to do good none will be more certain of God's approval, more satisfactory to ourselves, more fruitful of blessing to our race, than those in which we have wrought faithfully under the divine hand for the salvation of the little child.

# The Open Door

## THE MOVEMENT FOR THE SALVATION OF THE LITTLE CHILD

May now be described:

First, let its CHIEF PURPOSE be restated, in the light of the foregoing teachings, as THE BRINGING OF THE CHILDREN TO ACCEPTABLE AND EFFECTIVE SELF-DEDICATION TO THE LOVE AND SERVICE OF GOD AT THE THRESHOLD OF ACCOUNTABILITY, AND THE LIFELONG ENJOYMENT OF THE UNBROKEN SAVING RELATION TO HIM.

For this end THE CHIEF HUMAN AGENTS TO BE SOUGHT IN THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF THE CHILDREN, according to the manifest will and plan of God; and these ENGAGED TO THEIR BEST ENDEAVORS THERETO, UNDER GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BY THE USE OF THIS BOOK AND OF SUCH OTHER HELPS AS MAY PROVIDENTIALLY ARISE.

The *necessity* and *immediate urgency* of this work has been shown. *It has been all too long undone. Nothing else that is being done is serving the purpose.* The better instructed among Christians have been feeling their way but slowly to a right understanding of the will of God for the children; cautiously acknowledging from time to time that *perhaps* their spiritual possibilities were being underrated, and venturing to set the earliest time at which they could be brought into a conscious saving relation to their heavenly Father a little nearer to their infancy. Many helpful and eloquent things have been said and written to encourage the

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expectation and cultivation of child-piety. The Cradle Roll has appeared in the Sunday-school; some improvements have been made in books for the instruction of the youngest scholars; and kindergarten methods have been adopted here and there. The responsibility of parents for their own work, and in no small part for the success of the teacher, has been urged with greater emphasis. This seems to be the limit of the advance. A few have followed these leadings; but the Christian masses have scarcely swerved by a hair's breadth from their current defective notions and consequent neglect of duty. For want of a definite and satisfactory result to be sought; and a plan, complete and practical, which could, from the outset, give reasonable assurance of the highest kind and degree of success; the appeals and efforts have been weak and the parents uninfluenced. Evidently *a new view*, radical and clear, and *a new course of action*, aggressive and progressive, were needed.

At this stage of affairs the Movement has made its appearance. It proposes to bring the teachings and influence of the book to certain classes of people.

1. To *Christian parents*, not only for the benefit of their children and themselves, but also with the expectation that they will pass on the help to others.

2. To *ministers of the Gospel*, seeking their co-operation in pulpit and pastoral work.

3. To *deaconesses and Sunday-school and other lay workers* who have to do with little children, asking their help in forms suited to their opportunities.

4. To *unsaved parents* by way of the above agencies; for, while the book is addressed to Christians, it may also be used to reveal to these their

unfitness to serve the spiritual life of their children, and so make their natural affection a means of leading them to seek first their own salvation and then that of their offspring.

Beginning with the homeland; it must reach the foreign field, overtake the general work of the Gospel, and, with this, cover the world.

To effect this no elaborate organization is needed. The work is a natural and regular part of the duty of the Christian Church collectively, and of the godly individually; and calls only for such a proportion of their interest and help as is due to its relative importance. All that is needed beyond this is an agency for the supply of the book and of such simple direction and aid to its circulation and use as will make these as wide and effective as possible. This provision has been made in a management under conditions that insure safe and efficient working.

No attempt, therefore, will be made to enroll any general membership or take any pledges. Meetings can be held, or circles formed, to forward the work anywhere, and without affiliation with any central body. The local Church and the individual Christian are alike free to do whatever they can to further the aims of the Movement.

For the *circulation* of the book two lines of action are in view, viz.:

*Sale by retail, direct from the office*; either to the purchaser or any person specified by him. *It can not be bought at the stores.*

*Gratuitous distribution* over specified areas; the funds for which will be raised, administered, and guaranteed, by a *local* management in each case. For this purpose the book, in issues of 1,000 copies



and upwards, can be obtained at a price so low as to justify the adoption of this plan on a large scale. Information as to this will be furnished to responsible inquirers.

A GENERAL FUND has been opened at the Office, from which grants in aid of the larger free distributions will be made. Contributors to this will be able to reach more receivers with the book through any given outlay than will be possible by retail purchase. Such gifts will be promptly acknowledged. Proper accounts and vouchers will be kept of all the receipts and disbursements of this fund, and these will be open at all proper times to inspection by all proper persons; and submitted annually to an auditing committee of members of the Colorado Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, whose report shall be printed with the Minutes of that body for the current year, and sent (in separate form) to any person sending a two-cent stamp to the Office for the same. The office work is in charge of a business manager; and its expenses of administration are secured as a first charge on the profits of sales. Therefore all moneys received as contributions, either to the General Fund or to the funds raised under local management, will be used only for their own increase, for the purchase of books and for paying the cost of their free distribution. Beyond these simple lines the character, extent, and cost of the work will be determined for themselves by all who engage in it.

Such other information as may be of use to those interested will be issued from time to time in the advertisements of the Movement, by inserts sent out with the books, and by such other means as may become available.



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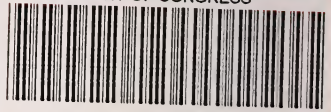
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